

**South Wilmington Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) Community
Revitalization Planning
Southbridge Business Survey**

**Report to the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental
Control Coastal Management Program**

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Introduction and Background

The City of Wilmington has prospered in recent years due in part to a substantial and growing economic base, various private development projects and a series of strategic public investments. However, the Southbridge neighborhood and adjacent areas of South Wilmington have generally not shared in this prosperity. A primary reason for this disconnect is the neighborhood's location – while it is a short distance from downtown, Southbridge is hemmed in by an interstate highway, the Port of Wilmington, the Christina River and a number of large former industrial properties. South Wilmington also is characterized by a population that is primarily African-American and generally less well-off economically than the rest of the City's population. But as redevelopment in downtown Wilmington and the Riverfront area continues and spreads into adjacent areas, the Southbridge neighborhood is feeling the effects of gentrification.

To address these and other issues, the Delaware Coastal Programs, a unit of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), collaboratively worked with a group of stakeholders to develop a Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) for South Wilmington. The South Wilmington SAMP seeks to ensure that redevelopment of this riverfront area is conducted in a manner that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. The SAMP is comprised of five components: Neighborhood Plan, Flooding and Drainage Plan, Socio-Economic Characterization, Ecological Characterization and an Economic Development Plan (South Wilmington SAMP Neighborhood Plan Work Group, 2006; Crum, Crosset, Ache, & Wiley, 2005). All components of the plan have been completed, with the exception of an Economic Development Plan.

A workgroup of Southbridge stakeholders met for over a year to identify and prioritize economic strategies that will assist Southbridge to grow businesses within their community. A survey of existing businesses and business needs was identified as a high priority by the workgroup. The purpose of the Southbridge business survey is to determine how business owners/managers perceive the business climate in the neighborhood, what they believe to be the most important actions needed to strengthen business activity, and what efforts might be made to strengthen the relationship between area businesses and the residents of Southbridge.

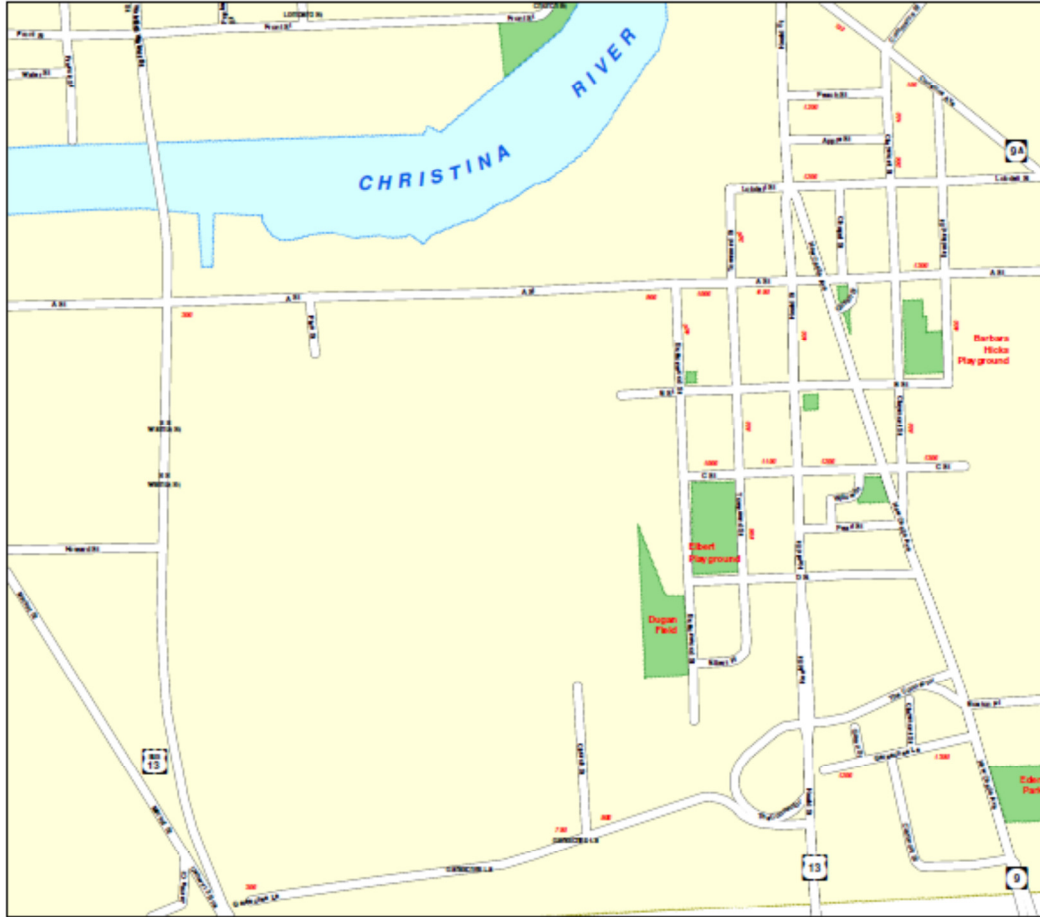
The Center for Community Research and Service (CCRS), an applied research and public service unit of the College of Education and Public Policy (CEPP) at the University of Delaware, designed the research plan and data collection instruments, recruited and trained community enumerators and surveyors, oversaw the implementation of field enumeration and surveys, and conducted analysis of the results of a survey of businesses in Southbridge. In this document, CCRS reports the results of the survey of Southbridge businesses and includes a

listing of incentives for Delaware businesses offered by state and local government (*see Appendix A*).

CCRS compiled a list of all licensed local businesses using the City of Wilmington's Finance Department listing of licensed businesses in Southbridge. The area defined as the "historic core" of Southbridge extends from the Christina River to the railroad tracks (northern and southern boundaries) and Church Street to Christina Avenue (western and eastern boundaries). Businesses along A Street were also included in the defined area (*see Map 1*). CCRS worked with the Southbridge Civic Association to recruit and train Southbridge residents as paid community-based enumerators who walked through the area, block by block, to confirm and supplement the City business listings. They completed an observation checklist for each of 63 observed businesses. The observation checklist included the following topics: condition of windows, signs and building facades, condition of street and sidewalks, location near other businesses and residences, availability of parking, and evidence of foot traffic and business activity.

Based on earlier business surveys focusing on (Center for Community Development, 1996) or including Southbridge (Stapleford & Tannian, 1993), it was anticipated that the field enumeration would discover some number of unlicensed businesses. These "informal" business organizations are likely to have some different concerns than licensed businesses, and, as long as they remain unlicensed, may not be eligible for existing public or private sector business services.

CCRS developed the business survey, obtained University of Delaware Human Subjects Review approval, and trained community enumerators to obtain informed consent and field the business survey. Survey questions included the following topics: the available workforce; competition; business relationships; use of public and private business services; barriers to business development; and expansion/relocation plans. Each of the 63 businesses identified through the field enumeration was asked to participate in the business survey. Thirty Southbridge businesses responded to the survey, a response rate of 47.6 percent. Although the existence of home-based and other "informal" businesses in Southbridge was noted by the leadership of the Southbridge Civic Association and by our community-based enumerators/surveyors, no home-based or other "informal" businesses are included in either the observation or survey portions of this study. This absence points to the difficulty of obtaining information about such businesses through survey methods, even when carried out by trained community residents.



Southbridge and greater South Wilmington



200 100 0 200 Feet

LEGEND
 Parks and Recreation
 Streets
 Water
 Railroads
 Other

Southbridge Business Observation and Enumeration

As noted above, in June 2009, CCRS obtained a listing of licensed businesses in Southbridge from the City of Wilmington. To supplement this list, in September 2009, CCRS staff conducted an initial walk-through business observation with Marvin Thomas, local business owner and president of the Southbridge Civic Association. In the same month, we also conducted preliminary observations of businesses on Christina Avenue, A Street, South Heald Street (south of the Livingston Bridge) and Garasches Lane by car. After examining walking and windshield survey topics used by regional and national planners, we developed a Walking Checklist for Southbridge (*see Appendix B*). CCRS staff recruited and trained four Southbridge residents who conducted 63 business observations in November 2009. The Walking Checklist for Southbridge is divided into two sections: the business and the area surrounding the business. In the business section, community-based enumerators evaluated the condition of signs, windows, building façade and sidewalks as good, fair, poor or not sure of condition and noted whether employees were visible in and around the business, whether employees were observed conducting job-related duties and whether customers were observed using the business. In the surroundings section, observers noted whether sidewalks were sufficient and streets were in good condition, along with the presence or absence of foot traffic, parks, residences, churches, bus stops, graffiti, vacant buildings or vacant lots, and signs of decay.

As illustrated in Table 1 and Table 2, overall, the condition of the signs, windows, and building facades of observed businesses in Southbridge was found to be in good or fair condition, with more than two-thirds of signs (68.9%), nearly two-thirds of windows (60.0%), and nearly three-quarters of building facades (73.8%) in good or fair condition. However, nearly three-quarters (70.5%) of sidewalks were found to be in fair or poor condition. For more than half of the observed businesses, there were employees visible in and around the business (58.1%) and performing job related duties (58.1%). The observations of customers using the businesses were more mixed, with about a third in each of the following responses; yes (32.8%), no (32.8%) and not sure (34.4%).

Table 1: Checklist responses to condition questions-Overall

<u>The Business</u>	<u>Good (%)</u>	<u>Fair (%)</u>	<u>Poor (%)</u>	<u>Not Sure (%)</u>
Signs	41.0	27.9	29.5	1.6
Windows	25.0	35.0	23.3	16.7
Building façade	27.9	45.9	23.0	3.3
Sidewalks leading to business	24.6	29.5	41.0	4.9

Table 2: Checklist responses to observation questions-Overall

<u>The Business</u>	<u>No (%)</u>	<u>Yes (%)</u>	<u>Not Sure (%)</u>
Employees visible in or around business	40.3	58.1	1.6

Employees performing job related duties	29.0	58.1	12.9
Customers utilizing the business	32.8	32.8	34.4
People loitering in or around the business	87.1	8.1	4.8
Dogs roaming or leashed on premises	91.9	6.5	1.6
<u>Surroundings</u>	<u>No (%)</u>	<u>Yes (%)</u>	<u>Not Sure (%)</u>
Sufficient sidewalks for walking	41.0	49.2	9.8
Streets in good condition for cars and pedestrians	44.3	52.5	3.3
Foot traffic	38.8	61.7	0.0
Parks	65.0	35.0	0.0
Residential structures	39.3	60.7	0.0
Other businesses	3.4	94.8	1.7
Church	30.5	69.5	0.0
Bus stop	49.2	50.8	0.0
Graffiti	90.0	10.0	0.0
Vacant buildings/vacant lots	22.4	72.4	5.2
Ample parking	25.0	75.0	0.0
Signs of decay on surrounding buildings	72.9	25.4	1.7

Community enumerators observed sufficient sidewalks in about half (49.2%) of the observed businesses, streets in good condition in about half (52.5%), foot traffic in about two-thirds (61.7%), and ample parking for three-quarters (75.0%) of the businesses they observed. People were not observed loitering around the majority (87.1%) of observed businesses, nor were there dogs roaming or unleashed (91.9%) near these businesses. The observed businesses were near bus stops (50.8%), residential structures (60.7%), churches (69.5%), and other businesses (94.8%), but not near parks (65.0%). Overall, despite the fact that three-quarters of observed businesses (72.4%) were located near vacant buildings or vacant lots, the majority (90.0%) did not have graffiti in the surrounding area nor were there signs of decay in the surrounding area for nearly three-quarters (72.9%).

We also analyzed the checklist observations by street location of the business and major industry category, using the first two digits of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Although businesses were observed on 13 streets in Southbridge, they were concentrated on five streets in the following distribution: the southern portion of South Heald Street (21.0%), A Street (19.4%), New Castle Avenue (17.7%), Garasches Lane (12.9%), and the northern portion of South Heald Street (8.1%).

Checklist Observations and Street Location

We found that the Checklist observations varied by the street location of the observed businesses. The characteristics of the observed businesses on the **southern portion of South Heald Street (south of Livingston Bridge)** were similar to those of the overall observations, with the condition of the signs (66.7%), windows (75.0%), and building facades (69.2%) of observed

businesses in good or fair condition. Similar to the overall observations, more than two-thirds (69.2%) of sidewalks near South Heald Street businesses (south of Livingston Bridge) were found to be in fair or poor condition. Also similar to the overall observations, for more than half of the observed businesses on the southern portion of South Heald Street, there were employees visible in and around the business (53.8%) and performing job related duties (53.8%). The observations of customers using the South Heald Street businesses (south of Livingston Bridge) were different than the overall observations, with more than two-thirds “not sure” (69.2%), about a quarter “no” (23.1%), and less than 10 percent “yes” (7.7%). The condition of sidewalks and the street on South Heald Street (south of Livingston Bridge) also varied from the overall observations. Community enumerators observed sufficient sidewalks in about two-fifths (41.7%) of the observed businesses on South Heald Street (south of Livingston Bridge), streets in good condition in about three-quarters (76.9%), ample parking for more than two-thirds (69.2%), and foot traffic in all (100.0%) of the businesses they observed. People were not observed loitering around any of the observed businesses, nor were there dogs roaming or unleashed near any of these businesses. The observed businesses on South Heald Street (south of Livingston Bridge) were not near residential structures (100.0%) or parks (100.0%), or bus stops (100%), but were near churches (69.2%), and other businesses (100.0%). Overall, despite the fact that more than four-fifths of observed businesses (84.6%) on South Heald Street (south of Livingston Bridge) were located near vacant buildings or vacant lots, none of these businesses (100.0%) had graffiti in the surrounding area nor were there signs of decay in the surrounding area for more than three-quarters (76.9%).

The physical condition of the businesses is better on the **north end of South Heald Street** than for Southbridge overall. More than three-quarters (80.0%) of signs, all windows (100.0%), and all building facades (100.0%) observed were in good or fair condition. All of the businesses (100.0%) observed on the north end of South Heald Street were surrounded by sidewalks in good condition. Employees were observed performing job related duties in three-fifths (60.0%) of the observed businesses. Customer observations on the north end of South Heald Street were more pronounced than the overall observations with three-fifths of the observed businesses (60.0%) being utilized by customers.

All of the businesses (100.0%) observed on the north end of South Heald Street were found to be surrounded by sufficient sidewalks and streets in good condition, an improvement from the overall observations. Similar to the evaluators’ overall observations, this street provided ample parking (60.0%), and foot traffic (100.0%), while loitering (100.0%) and dogs roaming or leashed (100.0%) were not noted. The businesses on the north end of South Heald Street are near residential structures (80.0%), but not near parks (100.0%); both observations follow the overall data trend. Like the rest of the businesses throughout Southbridge, the businesses on the north end of South Heald are near bus stops (100.0%), churches (100.0%), and other

businesses (80.0%). Similar to the overall observations, three-fifths of the businesses (60.0%) on the north end of South Heald Street are near vacant properties, but no graffiti was observed in the surrounding area, and no signs of decay were noted by community enumerators.

Businesses on **New Castle Avenue** do not conform to the overall characteristics of the neighborhood. Most of the signs (81.8%), all of the windows (100.0%), all of the building facades (100.0%), and all of the surrounding sidewalks (100.0%) were observed to be in fair or poor condition. Employees were visible and observed performing job related duties in most businesses (90.9%). Customers were observed utilizing the business in over two-thirds of observed businesses (70.0%).

In contrast to Southbridge as a whole, sufficient sidewalks were present in more than three-fourths (81.1%) of the businesses on New Castle Avenue and most (90.9%) were not served by streets in good condition. Like the overall observations, the businesses on New Castle Avenue had ample parking (100.0%), and experienced foot traffic (60.0%). More loitering was present on New Castle Avenue (45.5%) but no dogs were observed roaming or leashed on the properties of any businesses on the street. Like Southbridge overall, businesses on New Castle Avenue are near residential structures (100.0%), parks (88.9%), bus stops (100.0%), churches (90.0%), other businesses (100.0%), and vacant properties (100.0%). Similar to overall observations, graffiti was present in less than one-third (30.0%) of the observed businesses, but in contrast, two-thirds (66.7%) of the businesses on New Castle Avenue were near properties that showed some signs of decay.

The businesses that community enumerators observed on **A Street** are similar to overall results in terms of physical condition. Two thirds (66.7%) of signs, half (50.0%) of windows, and more than three-quarters (83.3%) of building facades were observed to be in good or fair condition. Two-thirds (66.7%) of observed businesses were surrounded by sidewalks in fair or poor condition. Consistent with overall data, employees were visible to observers and performing job related duties in more than half (58.3%) of the businesses on A Street, and observations on customers were split. Responses show one-third (33.3%) of the businesses with evidence of customers utilizing services, one-third (33.3%) without customers evident, and one-third (33.3%) of the responses was “not sure.”

Much like Southbridge as a whole, half (50.0%) of the businesses were served by sufficient sidewalks and over two-thirds (83.3%) of the businesses were served by streets in good condition. Ample parking is available for customers of over half (58.3%) of the observed businesses, down slightly from the overall observations. Foot traffic, however, was present in the vicinity of nearly all (91.7%) of the businesses on A Street, which is a larger percentage than the overall data. None of the businesses were observed to have loitering in the area. Dogs were present roaming or leashed on the property of less than 10 percent (8.3%) of the

businesses on A Street. Community enumerators report that, like the overall observations, businesses on A Street are near residential properties (83.3%), but not near parks (91.7%). These businesses are near bus stops (83.3%), churches (58.3%), and other businesses (100.0%). Nearly two-thirds (63.6%) of the businesses are near vacant properties and, as in the entire Southbridge area, graffiti (91.7%) and decay (100.0%) were not observed in the vicinity.

Similar to the overall results, businesses on **Garasches Lane** were observed to have signs (87.5%), windows (87.5%), and building facades (75.0%) in good or fair condition. Sidewalks for the businesses were observed to be in fair or poor condition (100.0%), with nearly two-thirds (62.5%) in poor condition. Employees were visible in over four-fifths (87.5%) and performing job related duties in three-fourths (75.0%) of observed businesses on Garasches Lane, both a larger percentage than total observation numbers. Like overall data, observations about customers are mixed. Customers were observed utilizing half (50.0%) of the businesses on Garasches Lane, but over one-third (37.5%) of the responses was “not sure.”

Other differences include the absence of both sufficient sidewalks (87.5%) and streets in good condition (100.0%) on Garasches Lane. While, like overall observations, ample parking is available for customers of nearly three-quarters (71.4%) of observed businesses, community enumerators observed a decrease in foot traffic on Garasches Lane with all businesses (100.0%) lacking the characteristic. Loitering was not observed in over three-quarters (87.5%) of observed businesses, but dogs were present near over one-third (37.5%) of the businesses, a considerably larger percentage than in Southbridge as a whole. In contrast to the overall observations, businesses in this area of Southbridge are not near residential structures (100.0%), parks (100.0%), bus stops (100.0%), or churches (75.0%) but are near other businesses (87.5%). Half of the businesses (50.0%) are not near vacant properties, but over a one-tenth (12.5%) of the responses are “not sure.” Graffiti was not observed around the businesses (100.0%) on Garasches Lane, and half (50.0%) were not surrounded by signs of decay, which is close to overall observations.

Checklist Observations and NAICS Major Industry Category

We also found that Checklist observations varied by major industry category (using the first two digits of the NAICS industry classification system). We were able to assign two digit NAICS codes to 32 of the 63 observed businesses. The observed businesses encompassed 11 major categories in the NAICS system, including construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, two categories of retail trade, transportation and warehousing, information, professional, scientific and technical services, health care and social assistance, accommodations and food services, and other services. The largest category of observed businesses is “other services,” which includes eight auto-related businesses, two barbershops and one laundry related business and represents 17.5 percent of all observed businesses and 34.4 percent of observed businesses

with NAICS codes. We observed five food services businesses, which account for 7.9 percent of the total and 15.6 percent of those with NAICS codes. Four retail trade (auto sales) and three health care and social assistance businesses account for 6.4 percent and 4.8 percent of the total group, respectively, and 12.5 percent and 9.4 percent of those with NAICS codes.

Similar to the overall observations, nearly three-quarters (72.7%) of the signs of observed **“other services” businesses** were found to be in good or fair condition, while more than three-quarters (81.8%) of the sidewalks were found to be in fair or poor condition. However, in contrast to the overall observations, more than two-fifths of windows (45.5%) and facades (45.5%) of “other services” businesses were found to be in fair or poor condition. Similar to the overall group, for nearly all of the “other services” businesses, there were employees visible in and around the business (81.8%) and performing job related duties (100%). Customers were observed using more than half (54.5%) of “other services” businesses, a larger group than the overall percentage.

In contrast to the overall observations, community enumerators observed streets in good condition in less than a fifth (18.2%) of the “other services” businesses. However, similar to the overall observations, sufficient sidewalks were found in about half (54.5%) of the “other services” businesses, foot traffic in about two-fifths (45.5%), and ample parking for more than three-quarters (81.8%). Also similar to the overall observations, people were not observed loitering around the majority (81.8%) of “other services” businesses, nor were there dogs roaming or unleashed (72.7%) near these businesses. The “other services” businesses were near bus stops (54.5%), residential structures (54.5%), churches (72.7%), parks (54.5%), and other businesses (90.9%). Despite the fact that nearly three-quarters of other services businesses (72.7%) were located near vacant buildings or vacant lots, the majority (90.9%) did not have graffiti in the surrounding area nor were there signs of decay in the surrounding area for about two-thirds (63.6%).

Similar to the overall observations, four-fifths (80.0%) of the signs observed for businesses in the **food service and accommodations** industry were in good condition. Half (50.0%) of the businesses observed in this category were found to have good sidewalks leading up to the businesses, and half (50.0%) were found to have sidewalks in poor condition. Unlike Southbridge as a whole, more than three-quarters (80.0%) of observed businesses in this industry were found to have fair or poor window condition, and the same proportion (80.0%) of businesses was observed to have building facades of fair quality. In contrast to the overall employee visibility in Southbridge, nearly two-thirds (60.0%) of the businesses showed neither signs of employees nor of people completing job related tasks. Similar to the overall results, two-fifths (40.0%) of businesses in this category showed signs of customer use, however unlike

the overall distribution among “yes,” “no,” and “not sure,” over half (60.0%) of businesses in the food service industry showed no signs of customer utilization at the time of observation.

While over half of all the businesses in Southbridge enjoy streets in good condition for travel, nearly two-thirds (60.0%) of the businesses in this industry are not surrounded by streets in good condition. A much higher proportion of food service businesses (80.0%) than all businesses in Southbridge (49.2%) were observed to be surrounded by sufficient sidewalks. Unlike Southbridge overall, more than half of the businesses in this category (60.0%) were not observed to have foot traffic. The lack of foot traffic and absence of visible customers may be associated with the time of day of observations. More businesses (100.0%) in food services and accommodations have ample parking than Southbridge businesses as a whole. Like the low rates experienced overall, businesses in this category also showed no signs of loitering (100.0%) or dogs (100.0%). More businesses in this industry are located near bus stops (80.0%), residential structures (100.0%), churches (100.0%), and parks (80.0%). In line with all Southbridge businesses, all of the food service businesses (100.0%) are located near other businesses. Like the area as a whole, three-quarters (75.0%) of these businesses are located near vacant properties, and graffiti in surrounding areas was found to affect one-fifth (20.0%) of the businesses in this industry. Much like the observations throughout Southbridge, decay was not observed (60.0%) to be a great problem.

Businesses in the **retail auto industry** also have a combination of similarities and differences with the overall observation data. Like the overall data, all of the observed auto retail businesses (100.0%) had signs in good or fair condition, but sidewalks in fair or poor condition. In contrast to the overall data, two-thirds (66.7%) of the businesses in Southbridge’s auto retail industry have windows in fair or poor condition and more than four-fifths (83.3%) have fair or poor building facades. In all of these businesses (100.0%) employees were visible and performing job related duties at the time of observation. While overall observations are split with regard to customers, nearly three-quarters (71.4%) of the auto retail businesses show signs of customer utilization at the time of observation.

In contrast to overall data, where over half of businesses are surrounded by streets in good condition, over three-quarters (85.7%) of businesses in the auto retail trade are not surrounded by streets in good condition. Similar to overall data, less than half (42.9%) of the auto retail businesses were surrounded by sufficient sidewalks. In contrast to the overall results, more than three-quarters (83.3%) of businesses in this industry did not experience foot traffic at the time of observation. Like results overall, ample parking is available for the majority (80.0%) of these businesses. Unlike the clear absence of loitering recorded for Southbridge as a whole, observations for loitering near auto retail businesses are split. Community enumerators report that 42.9% of businesses were not surrounded by loitering and 42.9% were surrounded by

loitering. More than one-tenth (14.3%) of the responses was “not sure” about loitering in the area. More than one-fourth (28.6%) of the businesses in this industry had dogs roaming or leashed on their properties, a larger percentage than overall results. Unlike the rest of the businesses observed throughout Southbridge, these businesses were not located around bus stops (66.7%), residential structures (66.7%), churches (50.0%), or parks (66.7%). However, like many of the businesses throughout the community, retail auto trade businesses were located near other businesses (80.0%). While only half (50.0%) of the businesses in this industry were reported to be located near vacant properties, 16.7% of responses in that category were “not sure.” Graffiti was more prevalent (16.7%) around these businesses than the rest of Southbridge, and a slightly higher percentage (40.0%) showed signs of decay.

Similar to overall results, businesses in the **health and social services industry** were equipped with signs, sidewalks, windows, and building facades in good or fair condition. Two-thirds (66.7%) had signs in fair condition and two-thirds (66.7%) had sidewalks in good condition. All had windows (100.0%) and building facades (100.0%) in good or fair condition. While most businesses, overall, had employees visible and performing job related duties, two-thirds (66.7%) of the businesses in the health care and social services industry showed no visible signs of employees. One third (33.3%) of observations fell into each category “yes,” “no,” and “not sure” when describing employees performing job related duties. Following the overall trend, observations were mixed when examining whether customers were utilizing the business. One-third (33.3%) of the observations fell into each category: “yes,” “no,” and “not sure.”

Two-thirds (66.7%) of businesses in the health care and social services industry have streets in good condition, a slightly larger percentage than the overall results. Although less than half of the businesses in Southbridge, overall, are surrounded by sufficient sidewalks, all (100.0%) of the businesses in this industry share that characteristic. Foot traffic was observed in two-thirds (66.7%) of the businesses in the health care and social services industry, approximately the same amount as reported throughout Southbridge. Two-thirds (66.7%) of the businesses enjoy ample parking for customers, a slightly smaller percentage than Southbridge businesses overall. Loitering (100.0%) and dogs (100.0%), like Southbridge businesses overall, were not observed to be problems for businesses in this industry. Like the rest of Southbridge, businesses in this industry were located near bus stops (66.7%), residential structures (100.0%), and churches (100.0%), but not near parks (66.7%). These businesses are also located near other businesses (100.0%). Only one-third (33.3%) of the businesses in the health care and social services industry were located near vacant properties, a smaller proportion than the nearly three-quarters of all Southbridge businesses that are located near these properties. Graffiti is not an observed problem near these businesses (100.0%), as is the case throughout Southbridge, and none of the businesses showed outward signs of decay, an improvement from the results for Southbridge overall.

Southbridge Business Survey

CCRS developed the business survey, obtained University of Delaware Human Subjects Review approval, and trained community enumerators to obtain informed consent and field the business survey. The Survey for Southbridge Businesses includes four sections: general information, business relationships/memberships and use of business services, future plans, and business climate in Southbridge (*see Appendix C*). As noted above, CCRS, working with the Southbridge Civic Association, recruited and trained four community surveyors. The same four community residents, under the supervision of CCRS staff, completed the checklist observations and fielded the survey. Each of the 63 businesses identified through the field enumeration was asked to participate in the business survey. Thirty Southbridge businesses responded to the survey, a response rate of 47.6 percent.

Characteristics of Surveyed Businesses

The majority of the surveyed Southbridge businesses are small businesses, ranging in size from zero employees (only owners and family members working in the business) to 85 employees, with an average of 7.5 employees (*see Appendix D*). Nearly two-thirds (64.3%) have three or fewer employees at their Southbridge location. Only a fifth (20.6%) of the surveyed businesses reported Southbridge residents among their employees. Although found on 10 streets in Southbridge, the surveyed businesses are concentrated on five streets: New Castle Avenue (20.0%), Garasches Lane (16.7%), the southern section of South Heald Street (13.3%), the northern section of South Heald Street (10.0%), Claymont Street (10.0%), and A Street (10.0%).

The majority of owners of surveyed businesses in Southbridge are male (76.7%). About a third (33.3%) of the surveyed business owners are African American, while about a quarter each are white (26.7%) or Hispanic (23.3%), with the remainder other (10.0%) or Asian (3.3%). More than half (53.3%) of the surveyed business owners have more than 15 years of business ownership or management experience, and another quarter (23.3%) have between 10 and 15 years business experience. Although about two-fifths (40.0%) of the surveyed business owners have owned their business for more than 15 years, there are also new business owners (of three years or less) in the surveyed group (30.0%). About two-fifths (21.4%) reported problems in business start up, including lack of financial resources, crime in the area, and zoning issues. About a third (32.1%) have been in their Southbridge location for more than 15 years, while about a quarter each have been there less than a year (25.0%) or between one and three years (21.4%). Surveyed business owners made decisions to locate in Southbridge for a number of reasons, including: neighborhood demographics, location, zoning, and access (36.7%), business

price, size, availability (36.7%), taking over an existing business (16.7%), and other reasons (9.9%). About a third (35.7%) of the surveyed businesses reported additional locations.

About half (53.6%) of the surveyed businesses own their space, while two-fifths (42.9%) lease. The majority (75.0%) use security at their business, with about two-thirds using alarms (60.7%) and a quarter has fences (25.0%). Two businesses use video surveillance. Two-fifths (20.0%) of the surveyed businesses pay an average wage between \$9.00 and \$11.00 per hour, while 13.3 percent pay between \$15.00 and \$18.00 per hour. A fifth (20.0%) of the businesses is family-owned and has no paid employees. About a quarter (23.3%) of the surveyed businesses did not respond to this question. The majority of the surveyed Southbridge businesses do not offer health insurance (73.3%), life insurance (86.7%), dental insurance (83.3%), or vision (86.7%) benefits to their employees.

We were able to assign two digit NAICS codes to all of the surveyed businesses. The surveyed businesses encompassed 12 major categories in the NAICS system, including construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, two categories of retail trade, transportation and warehousing, information, professional, scientific and technical services, health care and social assistance, administrative and support and waste management and remediation services, accommodations and food services, and other services. The largest category of surveyed businesses is “other services,” which includes eight auto-related businesses, two barbershops and one laundry related business and represents 36.7 percent of all surveyed businesses. Five retail trade (auto sales) businesses account for 16.7 percent of the total group. We also interviewed four food services businesses, which account for 13.3 percent of the total.

Business Relationships/Memberships and Use of Business Services

Two-thirds (63.3%) of the surveyed businesses do not interact (as a supplier, user, etc.) with other businesses in Southbridge, while about a quarter (26.7%) report working with businesses in similar industries in or around Southbridge. A smaller group (13.3%) report working with other local businesses on community service efforts and mutual support. The majority (76.7%) of the surveyed businesses do not belong to a business association (such as the Chamber of Commerce). More than half (58.6%) do not interact with the nearby Port of Wilmington, although about a quarter (23.3%) get business from Port employees, and 10 percent have contracts with the Port. Virtually none of the surveyed businesses have used federal, state or local government incentives for businesses, including: Christina Gateway Tax Incentive Program (none), Real Property Tax Exemption Program (none), Head Tax (none), Enterprise Zone (none), Blue Collar Tax Program (none), Brownfields Program (3.4%), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program (3.4%), or Small Business Administration (none). When asked about these incentive programs, the surveyed businesses were provided with an annotated list of incentives. Similarly, almost none of the surveyed businesses have used services offered to

businesses by: Wilmington Commerce Department (3.4%), Wilmington Economic Development Corporation (none), Small Business Development Corporation (3.4%), or the Delaware Economic Development Office (3.4%). The majority (75.9%) of the surveyed businesses were not aware that these types of incentives and programs existed prior to our survey. About two-fifths (43.3%) of the surveyed businesses reported no knowledge about local business leaders, another two-fifths (40.0%) listed individual business owners, and about a quarter (23.3%) named Marvin Thomas, who is also president of the Southbridge Civic Association. About a third (30.0%) perceive strengths of the Southbridge business community, including community residents, mutual support and location, while another third (30.0%) do not perceive any strengths.

Future Plans

Two-thirds (63.3%) of the surveyed businesses, would, if they had financing, offer new services or products, including, those complementary or similar to their existing businesses (31.6%), unspecified retail (15.8%), restaurant (15.8%), community services (15.8%), entertainment/recreation (10.5%), and other (10.5%).

About three-quarters (73.3%) of the surveyed businesses responded that public services provided by the city, county, state or federal government would help their businesses prosper. About a quarter of this group (27.3%) see lower taxes as the key, 13.6 percent need financial assistance, 13.3 percent want road maintenance and repair, and nine percent each want training and help with government contracts, and 4.5 percent see a need for additional housing in the area .

Half (50.0%) of the surveyed businesses have expansion plans. About three-quarters (75.0%) of this group plan to add to their facilities, upgrade their facilities, or increase the size of their facilities. A third of the group with expansion plans want to offer new or expanded services. Less than 10 percent (8.3%) plan to purchase additional property. Three-quarters (73.3%) of this group plan to expand their business in the same location or nearby in Southbridge. About a quarter (26.7%) plan to expand their business in a different location. Their reasons for expansion include: improving business (50.0%), better serving the community (41.7%), and utilizing the property (8.3%).

Business Climate in Southbridge

About three-quarters (73.3%) of the surveyed businesses perceive advantages in operating their business in Southbridge. Slightly more than half (54.5%) of this group see the location as convenient and affordable. Two-fifths (45.5%) see their relationship with the Southbridge community as an advantage. About two-thirds (60.0%) of the surveyed businesses perceive disadvantages to operating their business in Southbridge. Two-fifths (44.4%) of this group see

disadvantages associated with declining population and the appearance of the neighborhood. A third (33.3%) sees crime and safety problems as a disadvantage.

About three-quarters (70.0%) of the surveyed businesses see a need for new retail services in Southbridge, including restaurants (28.6%), grocery stores (23.8%), shopping center (19.0%), pharmacy (19.0%), laundromat (14.3%), clothing store (14.3%), auto-related business (14.3%), other services (14.3%), bank (9.5%), beauty store (9.5%), other retail (9.5%), gas station (4.8%), and maintenance services (4.8%).

About half (46.7%) of the surveyed businesses believe that businesses in Southbridge need to expand. A third (35.7%) of this group mentioned specific existing businesses that should expand, including dry cleaners, restaurants, personal services, and retail. Those who perceive a need for expansion see benefits for the community (30.0%), increased competition (20.0%), increased profits (20.0%), and more space for customers (20.0%).

About three-quarters (76.6%) of the surveyed group responded that new services or additional businesses would be helpful to their businesses. Of this group, about a quarter (26.1%) want more auto-related businesses, about two-fifths (17.4%) see a need for wholesale trade, less than 10 percent each want more restaurants (8.7%) or other retail (8.7%), and less than five percent each see a need for a school (4.4%), nonprofits (4.4%), community support (4.4%), laundromat (4.4%), or accounting services (4.4%).

About two-thirds (66.7%) of the surveyed businesses are satisfied with police and fire department response times. Although more than four-fifths (85.7%) are satisfied with the available pool of workers for their businesses, the majority (80.0%) also believe that vocational-technical training facilities would be beneficial to Southbridge businesses. More than three-quarters of the surveyed businesses would use a bank located in Southbridge (80.0%) and a catering service located in Southbridge (79.3%) for business purposes.

If the City of Wilmington was going to spend money in Southbridge to make improvements but could only spend money in one area, more than two-fifths (46.7%) of surveyed businesses picked "Clean up drug problem," and more than two-fifths (46.7%) picked "Provide more jobs." Additional responses to this question include: schools (20.0%), stores (15.0%), transportation (10.0%), and housing (10.0%).

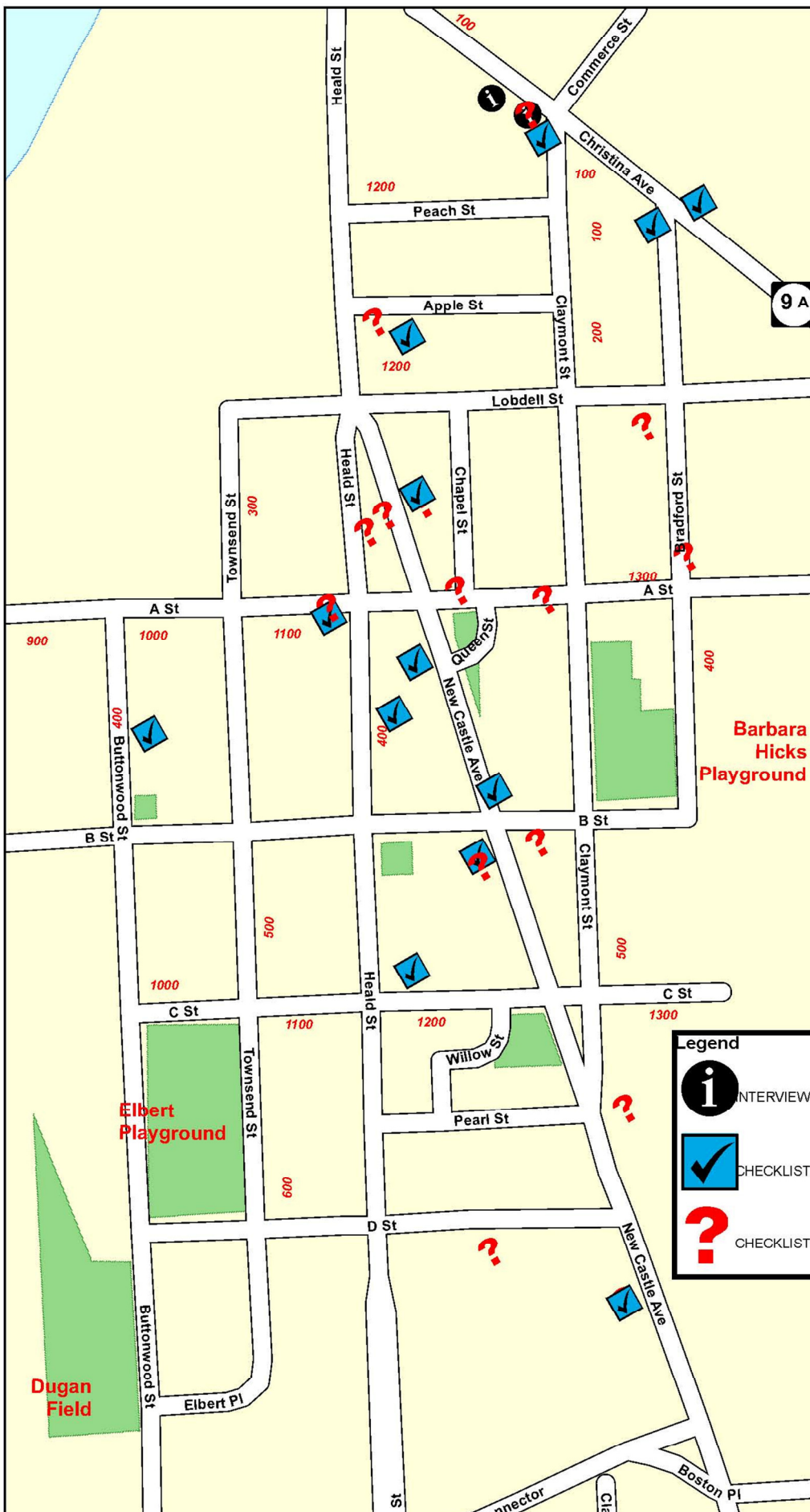
Surveyed businesses perceive the most important issue facing their business as the slow economy and loss of business (40.0%), finances (16.0%), neighborhood problems (16.0%), taxes (8.0%), and less than five percent each, state regulations (4.0%), customers (4.0%), the Riverfront (4.0%), and increasing costs (4.0%).

Survey Responses and Street Location

As noted earlier, although found on 10 streets in Southbridge, the surveyed businesses are concentrated on five streets: New Castle Avenue (20.0%), Garasches Lane (16.7%), the southern section of South Heald Street (13.3%), the northern section of South Heald Street (10.0%), Claymont Street (10.0%), and A Street (10.0%) (*See Map 2, 3, and 4 for location of Observed and Surveyed Businesses*). In the following discussion, differences from the overall responses of surveyed businesses are noted.

More African Americans (66.7%) are owners of the surveyed businesses located on **New Castle Avenue** and these businesses are smaller, with an average employee size of less than one. The New Castle Avenue business owners have less business experience: a third (33.3%) have less than one year of business experience, a third (33.3%) have seven to nine years of business experience, and a third (33.3%) have 10 to 15 years of business experience. They also have owned their businesses for a shorter period than the total surveyed group. A third (33.3%) has owned their business for less than one year, a third (33.3%) for one to three years, and a third (33.3%) for seven to nine years. In contrast to the overall responses, only a third (33.3%) had problems in business start up. Two-thirds (66.7%) of the New Castle Avenue businesses use security, with the majority (80.0%) using alarms, and two-fifths (40.0%) using fences. The New Castle Avenue businesses pay lower wages; a third (33.3%) pay between \$7.25 and \$9.00 per hour. The majority (83.3%) of the New Castle Avenue business owners have business expansion plans.

More women (20.0%) and more Hispanics (60.0%) and whites (40.0%) are owners of the surveyed businesses located on **Garasches Lane**. All of the surveyed businesses on Garasches Lane are auto repair (60.0%) or auto sales (40.0%) and have an average of 2.2 employees. Business owners on Garasches Lane are, in general, more experienced. All respondents (100.0%) report having seven or more years of experience owning or managing a business, with nearly two-thirds (60.0%) having at least 15 years experience. None of the businesses on Garasches Lane experienced startup problems, and all owners (100.0%) also own their property. In contrast to the overall responses, nearly two-thirds (60.0%) of businesses do not have a second location. Comparison of wages was not possible; nearly two-thirds (60.0%) of respondents did not respond to questions about wages, while more than one-third (40.0%) responded "other." A slightly higher percentage (40.0%) offers health insurance to employees. None of the respondents reported using any business incentives, while one-fifth (20.0%) report utilizing the City of Wilmington's Commerce Department for assistance. None of the businesses on Garasches Lane have expansion plans, and more than half (60.0%) do not think that any other Southbridge business needs to expand. The most popular improvement



Southbridge
and greater
South Wilmington



100 50 0 100 Feet

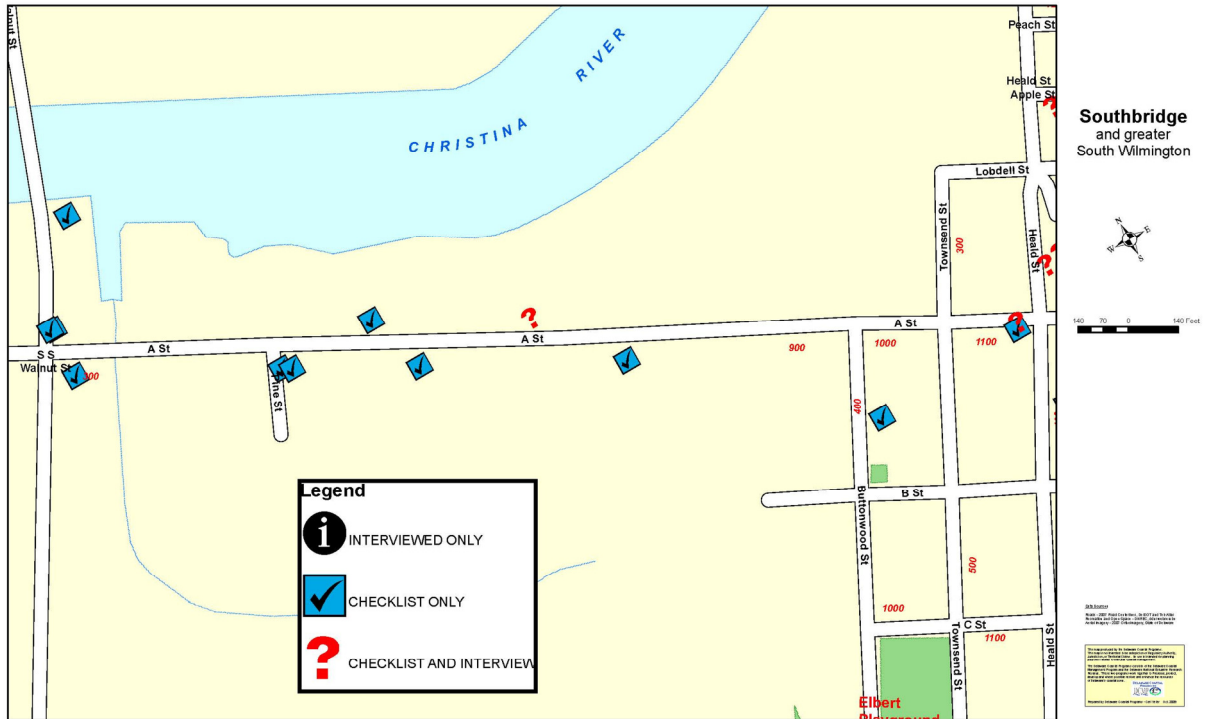
Barbara
Hicks
Playground

Elbert
Playground

Dugan
Field

Legend

- INTERVIEWED ONLY
- CHECKLIST ONLY
- CHECKLIST AND INTERVIEW



business owners on Garasches Lane would like to see is for the city to help provide more jobs (60.0%).

All of the owners of surveyed businesses located on the **southern section of South Heald Street (south of the Livingston Bridge)** are men. Most of these owners (50.0%) fall in the other category for race and ethnicity and these businesses are larger, with an average of 11.67 employees. These business owners are more experienced than the overall group. All owners have at least 10 years of experience running a businesses, but a full two-thirds (66.7%) have only been at their current location between one and three years. More of these businesses (33.3%) had startup problems in the beginning. All of the businesses in this stretch lease their properties and all follow some security measures. One-third (33.3%) use a professional security service and all (100.0%) respondents utilize alarms. Wages in these businesses are slightly higher and benefits are more common than the overall responses. More of the businesses on this end of South Heald Street (66.7%) have additional locations. One-quarter (25.0%) of respondents note an average wage between \$13.01 and \$15.00/hour. Half (50.0%) offer health insurance to their employees, one-quarter (25.0%) offer life, dental, and vision plans. More of these businesses (50.0%) report some type of collaboration or interaction with other businesses in the area, and more (50.0%) are members of business associations or groups. However, none of the businesses have any interaction with the Port of Wilmington. A full quarter (25.0%) utilized the Brownfields incentive program, half (50.0%) worked with the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO), and more of these business owners (50.0%) were previously aware of all of the incentives and offices available for assistance. More of the businesses on the southern section of South Heald Street (75.0%) have expansion plans. Responses to a question regarding improvements needed in the area are split: provide more jobs (25.0%), clean up drug problem (25.0%), no response (25.0%), and multiple responses (25.0%).

About a third of the surveyed business owners on the **northern section of South Heald Street** are women (33.3%), all of the surveyed owners are African American, and these businesses are smaller, with an average of one employee. All of the business owners on this section of South Heald Street (100.0%) have at least 15 years of business experience, 15 years of experience running this particular business, and 15 years in their current location. A higher percentage (66.7%) experienced problems at startup. All of these businesses own their property, and all use security in the form of alarms. Two-thirds (66.7%) of these businesses responded “other” for questions about wages. In contrast to overall results, none of these businesses offer any of the listed benefits. In contrast to overall results, none of these businesses are members of business associations or groups, and none used any of the incentives or organizations for assistance. Only one-third (33.3%) have expansion plans, but more (66.7%) think that some other businesses in Southbridge should expand. Responses regarding improvements needed in

the area are split: clean up drug problems (33.3%), better housing (33.3%), and multiple responses (33.3%).

All of the surveyed businesses owners on **Claymont Street** are men, more of these owners are Hispanic (66.7%), and these businesses are smaller, with an average of one employee. In contrast to overall results, where the majority had over 15 years of business experience, only one-third (33.3%) of the business owners on Claymont Street have equivalent experience. All of these businesses have been in their present location for less than six years. None of the surveyed Claymont Street business owners reported problems with startup. Unlike the overall results, the properties on Claymont Street are all leased. In contrast to overall results, only one-third (33.3%) of these business owners use security, all in the form of alarms. While only one-fifth of the overall businesses have employees that live in Southbridge, two-thirds (66.6%) of the businesses on Claymont Street employ at least one Southbridge resident. None of the participating businesses on Claymont Street offer benefits to their employees. In contrast to the overall responses, two-thirds (66.7%) of these businesses interact with other Southbridge businesses, and two-thirds (66.7%) interact with the Port of Wilmington. None of the surveyed business owners on Claymont Street are members of business associations, and none utilized any of the survey's listed incentives or agencies. All of the business owners noted that they were previously unaware of any of these types of programs. More business owners on Claymont Street (66.7%) have expansion plans, but only one-third (33.3%) think that other Southbridge businesses should expand. Responses regarding improvements needed in the area are split: provide more jobs (33.3%), clean up drug problem (33.3%), and multiple responses (33.3%).

More of the surveyed business owners on **A Street** are Asian (33.3%), while the businesses are larger, with an average of five employees. Owners on A Street are less experienced than the overall responses show. Only one-third (33.3%) have more than fifteen years experience, and one-third has less than one year of experience. None of the surveyed businesses on A Street experienced problems at startup. All of the businesses report using some sort of security for their business. More businesses on A Street (66.7%) use professional security services to protect their businesses. Two-thirds (66.7%) of these businesses pay an average wage of \$9.01-11.00/hour. In contrast to overall results, two-thirds (66.7%) have interaction with the Port of Wilmington. None of the businesses on A Street have utilized the incentives and programs outlined in the survey. None of the surveyed businesses on A Street have expansion plans, and none think that other Southbridge businesses should expand. Responses regarding improvements needed in the area are split: provide more jobs (33.3%), clean up drug problem (33.3%), and multiple responses (33.3%).

Survey Responses and NAICS Major Industry Category

As noted above, the largest category of surveyed businesses is “other services,” which includes eight auto-related businesses, two barbershops and one laundry related business and represents 36.7 percent of all surveyed businesses. Five retail trade (auto sales) businesses account for 16.7 percent of the total group. We also interviewed four food services businesses, which account for 13.3 percent of the total.

“Other services” businesses are smaller, with an average of three employees. More of these business owners are Hispanic (45.5%) and African American (36.4%) than the overall responses. The owners of “other services” businesses have less business ownership and management experience; two-fifths (45.5%) have between 10 and 15 years experience and about a fifth (18.2%) have between seven and nine years experience. In contrast to the overall responses, most of these businesses (90.0%) did not have problems at business start up. “Other services” businesses pay both lower and higher wages than the overall group. About a fifth (18.2%) pay an average wage between \$9.00 and \$11.00 per hour and about a fifth (18.2%) pay an average wage between \$15.00 and \$18.00 per hour. More of these businesses (36.4%) interact with the Port of Wilmington. Fewer of these businesses (54.5%) are satisfied with police and fire department response times. All of the “other services” businesses would use a bank located in Southbridge for business purposes.

More of the businesses in the **retail auto trade industry** (42.9%) are owned by Hispanics than for Southbridge overall. These businesses are smaller, with an average of 4.5 employees. Fewer of these business (14.3%) owners reported startup problems. More of these businesses (71.4%) own the property. While a similar percentage uses security, a higher proportion (42.9%) uses security fences. In contrast to the overall responses, more than one-tenth (14.3%) of the businesses pay employees over \$18.00/hour, and more than half (57.1%) did not respond to the question about wages. More businesses in the retail auto trade have no interaction with other Southbridge businesses (85.7%), and more have no interaction with the Port of Wilmington (71.4%). In contrast to the overall results, more than one-tenth (14.3%) of these businesses have worked with the City Commerce Department, and all were previously unaware of the programs and incentives mentioned in this survey. In contrast to the overall results, only about one-tenth (14.3%) of the surveyed businesses in the retail auto trade have expansion plans, and only about one-tenth (14.3%) think that other businesses in Southbridge should expand. While a similar percentage selected “provide more jobs” (42.9%) as a necessary improvement by the City of Wilmington, the rest of the responses were mixed. Only about one-quarter (28.6%) chose “clean up drug problem”, one-tenth (14.3%) chose “better housing”, and another tenth (14.3%) were multiple responses.

All of the businesses in the **food services industry** are owned by men (100.0%) and African Americans (100.0%), larger proportions than the overall responses. These businesses are smaller, with 1.75 average employees. While a similar number utilizes security, one-quarter (25.0%) use a professional security service. In contrast to the overall results, lower wages are offered in these businesses. One-quarter (25.0%) pay employees \$7.25-9.00/hour and another quarter pay \$9.01-11.00/hour. The other half either refused this inquiry or provided “other” as a response. These businesses have slightly more interaction with other businesses in Southbridge (50.0%), but none are members of business associations or groups. In contrast to the overall results, three-quarters (75.0%) have some interaction with the Port of Wilmington. None of these businesses utilized any of the programs or incentives described in the survey. While a similar amount (50.0%) chose “provide more jobs” as a necessary improvement by the City of Wilmington, more chose “better housing” (25.0%) or provided multiple answers (25.0%).

Conclusion

This report documents the results of observations of 63 businesses and interviews with 30 businesses in Southbridge. As stated in the Introduction, the purpose of this study is to determine how Southbridge business owners/managers perceive the business climate in the neighborhood, what they believe to be the most important actions needed to strengthen business activity, and what efforts might be taken to strengthen the relationship between area businesses and the residents of Southbridge.

The observation checklist included the following topics: condition of windows, signs and building facades, condition of streets and sidewalks, location near other businesses and residences, availability of parking, and evidence of foot traffic and business activity. Overall, the condition of the signs, windows and building facades of the businesses in Southbridge were found to be in good or fair condition. However, nearly three – quarters of the sidewalks were found to be in fair or poor condition. There were differences in Walking Checklist observations by street location and by NAICS major industry category.

Survey questions included the following topics: the available workforce, competition, use of public and private business services, barriers to business development, and expansion/relocation plans. Surveyed businesses perceive the most important issue facing their business as a combination of national/state and local factors, including the slow economy and loss of business, neighborhood problems, taxes and regulations. They believe that the City of Wilmington should “clean up the drug problem” and “provide more jobs.” Half of the surveyed businesses have expansion plans. Many see a need for new retail services in Southbridge and a need for expansion of existing businesses. Very few Southbridge businesses employ Southbridge residents.

The majority of the surveyed businesses do not belong to business associations. Virtually none of the surveyed businesses have used existing federal, state or local incentives for businesses or business services offered by city, state or federal government. Most were not aware that these types of incentives and services existed prior to our survey.

Several recommendations follow from the results of this study:

Explore ways to improve the physical condition of local businesses and their surroundings;

Invite Southbridge businesses to participate in neighborhood development and improvement programs;

Actively encourage the formation of a Southbridge Business Association and avenues for inclusion of Southbridge businesses in existing business associations; and,

Develop relationships between city, state and federal government business services and Southbridge businesses.

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Center for Community Development (1996) *Survey of Southbridge Businesses*. Report to Neighborhood House and Southbridge Civic Association. Newark, DE: University of Delaware

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Stapleford, John and Francis Tannian (1993) *Urban Neighborhoods: Opportunity for Community Reinvestment Act Investment*. Report to City of Wilmington, Delaware. Newark, DE: University of Delaware.

South Wilmington SAMP Neighborhood Plan Work Group (2006) *South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan*. With technical assistance from Phillips Press Shapiro Associates, Inc. Dover, DE: Delaware Coastal Programs, DNREC.

Appendix A

Listing of Incentives for Delaware Businesses Offered by State and Local Government

Source: City of Wilmington Business Services (<http://76.12.60.78/biztax.htm>)

Christiana Gateway Tax Incentive Program

Any business located or relocating and own property in Christina Gateway area may be eligible for abatement from real property tax up to 100% of the increased value of the property that derives from renovations of existing structures or construction of new ones for a five-year period.

Real Property Tax Exemption Program

Any owner of real property in the City of Wilmington that contains one or more parcels with improvements and is used exclusively for non-residential, commercial, ore industrial business purposes can be eligible for exemption from real estate taxation if business creates no fewer than 1,500 new full time positions.

Head Tax

Any new or relocating business in the city that brings over 100 new employees can obtain a waiver from the City's "Head" tax. The "head" tax is a \$10.00 fee per employee that city charges for upkeep of the city's infrastructure, police, and other city services.

Enterprise Zone

Businesses located or relocating within the Enterprise Zone are eligible for tax-exempt bond financing, which has a lower interest rate than conventional financing.

Blue collar Tax Program

Any business which creates blue-collar jobs in the city is eligible for a \$250.00 state tax credit per \$100,000,000 invested.

Brownfields

The state, in cooperation with the federal government, is offering incentives to businesses which choose to relocate on any Brownfield site instead of a new site. A "Brownfield" is a vacant or unoccupied site that may have been environmentally contaminated by prior commercial or industrial use. The cost of evaluating the site for contamination is divided between the government and the business, and the cleanup cost, if necessary, is paid for by the government. Businesses which locate in these areas are eligible for an additional \$500.—state credit per \$100,000 invested. Additionally, any business that relocates on a Brownfield site located within any targeted areas, as deemed by the city, is eligible for \$750.00 in state credit per \$100,000 invested.

Business Enterprises

The city does provide assistance to disadvantaged businesses to help them become involved in city commerce and obtaining city contracts when possible.

-A business at least 51% of which is owned and controlled by one or more socially disadvantaged individuals who, in fact, control the management and daily business operations of that business.

-“Disadvantaged individuals” are those who have been actual victims of discriminatory practices or individuals whose ability to compete in the free enterprise system has been impaired due to diminished capital and credit opportunities as compared to others in the same business who are not so disadvantaged.

**Source: City of Wilmington Office of Economic Development/Minority Business Enterprise Office
(<http://76.12.60.78/dba.htm>)**

Appendix B

Walking Checklist for Southbridge

Time of Observation _____ am/pm

Was this observation made during the operating hours of the business? (Circle One) Yes/No/Not Sure

Name and Address of business Observed:

The Business

These questions refer only to the business you are observing, the building the business occupies, and the immediate property

Please check the appropriate response about the condition of the following:

	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
Signs				
Windows				
Building façade				
Sidewalks leading to business				

Please note if any of the following are present in or around the business you are observing:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
Employees visible in or around business			
Employees performing job related duties			
Customers utilizing the business			
People loitering in or around the business			
Dogs roaming or leashed on premises			

Surroundings

Please note if any of the following are present in the area surrounding the business you are observing:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
Sufficient sidewalks for walking			
Streets in good condition for cars and pedestrians			
Foot traffic			
Parks			
Residential structures			
Other businesses			
Church			
Bus stop			
Graffiti			
Vacant buildings/vacant lots			
Ample parking			
Signs of decay on surrounding buildings			

Appendix C

Southbridge Business Survey

Survey for Southbridge Businesses

Date of Interview _____ Name of Interviewer _____

Time of Interview: Begin _____ End _____

General Information

1. Name of business: _____
2. Address of business: _____
3. Name of interviewee: _____ Owner/Manager (Circle One)
4. Owner name and contact information: _____
5. Gender of the business owner: Male/Female (Circle One)
6. What is the race/ethnicity of the business owner?

Hispanic	_____	Asian	_____
White	_____	Other:	_____
Black/African American	_____		

7. What goods or services does this business provide?

Construction	_____	Food service	_____
Manufacturing	_____	Food sales	_____
Transportation	_____	Auto repair	_____
Communications	_____	Auto sales	_____
Utility services	_____	Entertainment	_____

Other: _____

8. How many years of experience have you (the owner) had managing or owning a business, including this business?

Less than 1 year	_____	7-9 years	_____
1-3 years	_____	10-15 years	_____
4-6 years	_____	More than 15 years	_____

9. How many years have you owned this business (all locations)?

Less than 1 year	_____	7-9 years	_____
1-3 years	_____	10-15 years	_____
4-6 years	_____	More than 15 years	_____

10. How long have you been at this location?

Less than 1 year	_____	7-9 years	_____
1-3 years	_____	10-15 years	_____
4-6 years	_____	More than 15 years	_____

11. Why did you decide to locate your business here?

12. Did you have any problems when you started the business?

Yes _____

No ___

If yes, what were they?

13. Do you own or lease your space?

Own ___

Lease ___

14. Do you use security at this location?

Yes ___

No ___

If yes, please list all types:

Professional Security Service ___

Alarms ___

Fence ___

Dog ___

Other: _____

15. Do you have any other locations?

Yes ___

No ___

If yes, how many other locations do you have?

If yes, where are the other locations?

16. How many employees do you have at this location?

17. How many of these employees reside in Southbridge?

18. What is the average wage for your employees?

Below \$7.25/hour	_____	\$13.01-15.00/hour	_____
\$7.25-9.00/hour	_____	\$15.00-18.00/hour	_____
\$9.01-11.00/hour	_____	Over \$18.00/hour	_____
\$11.01-13.00/hour	_____	Other: _____	

19. Do you provide any types of benefits to your employees?

Health Insurance	_____	Vision	_____
Life Insurance	_____	Other: _____	
Dental	_____		

Relationships/Memberships and Use of Business Services

1. Does your business interact or collaborate with any other businesses (supplier, user, etc) in Southbridge?

Yes ____

No ____

If yes, in what capacity?

2. Are you a member of any business associations such as Chambers of Commerce?

Yes ____

No ____

If yes, please tell us which ones:

3. Who are the business leaders in Southbridge?

4. What are the strengths of the Southbridge business community?

5. Does your business interact with the Port of Wilmington?

Yes ____

No _____

If yes, in what capacity?

6. Have you ever utilized any of the following government incentives for business owners?

Christiana Gateway Tax Incentive Program _____

Real Property Tax Exemption Program _____

Head Tax _____

Enterprise Zone _____

Blue Collar Tax program _____

Brownfields _____

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

Federal Small Business Administration Programs _____

Others: _____

7. Have you ever used the services offered to businesses by the following organizations?

City Commerce Department _____

Delaware Economic Development Office
(DEDO) _____

Wilmington Economic Development
Corporation (WEDCO) _____

Other: _____

Small Business Development Corporation
(SBDC) _____

If you have used any of these programs or organizations, how satisfied were you with the services provided?

Program or service _____

Not at all satisfied ____ Somewhat satisfied ____ Very Satisfied ____

Program or service _____

Not at all satisfied ____ Somewhat satisfied ____ Very Satisfied ____

Program or service _____

Not at all satisfied ____ Somewhat satisfied ____ Very Satisfied ____

Program or service _____

Not at all satisfied ____ Somewhat satisfied ____ Very Satisfied ____

8. Were you previously aware that these types of incentives and programs existed?

Yes ____

No ____

Future Plans

1. If you had financing, what other services, products, or new businesses would you like to provide in this community?

2. What kind of public services provided by the city, county, state or federal government would best help your community and your business to prosper?

3. Do you have expansion plans?

Yes ____

No ____

If yes, please explain:

4. Where would you like to expand?

Why do you want to expand there?

Business Climate in Southbridge

1. What, if any, are the advantages of having your business in Southbridge?

2. What, if any, are the disadvantages of having your business in Southbridge?

3. What kinds of new retail businesses does Southbridge need?

4. Do any of the businesses in Southbridge need to expand?

Yes ____

No ____

If yes, which ones and why?

5. What kinds of businesses are there too many of already?

6. What services or other businesses (wholesale, retail or nonprofit) would be helpful to you as a business owner in Southbridge?

7. Are you satisfied with police and fire response time to your business?

Yes ____

No ____

Please explain:

8. Are you satisfied with the pool of available workers for your business?

Yes ____

No ____

Please Explain:

9. Do you think vocational-technical training facilities would be beneficial to Southbridge businesses?

Yes ____

No ____

10. If a bank were located in Southbridge would you consider using it to do your banking business?

Yes ____

No ____

11. If there were a good catering service in Southbridge, would you make use of it for business purposes?

Yes ____

No ____

12. If the City of Wilmington was going to spend money to make improvements in Southbridge but could only spend money on one of the following areas, which should it be?

Better Schools ____

Better Stores _____

Provide More Jobs _____

Clean Up Drug Problem _____

Better Transportation _____

Better Housing _____

Other: _____

13. What is the most important problem or issue facing your business?

Have you taken any steps to resolve it?

Yes ____

No ____

What happened?

Our goal is to find out what kind of help businesses in Southbridge need, what they want, how they can provide help to fellow businesspeople, and what kinds of additional help these businesses need.

14. Do you have a current business license to operate in Southbridge?

Yes ____

No ____

If unlicensed, what are the problems/obstacles to your obtaining a license for your business?

Appendix D

Characteristics of Surveyed Businesses

Owner Gender

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Male	76.7
Female	16.7
No Response	6.7

Owner Race

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Hispanic	23.3
White	26.7
Black/African American	33.3
Asian	3.3
Other	10.0
No Response	3.3

Total business experience

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Less than 1 year	10.0
1-3 years	0.0
4-6 years	3.3
7-9 years	10.0
10-15 years	23.3
More than 15 years	53.3

Current business experience

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Less than 1 year	16.7
1-3 years	13.3
4-6 years	6.7
7-9 years	10.0
10-15 years	10.0
More than 15 years	40.0
No Response	3.3

Years in current location

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Less than 1 year	25.0
1-3 years	21.4
4-6 years	3.6
7-9 years	10.7
10-15 years	7.1
More than 15 years	32.1

Startup Problems

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	21.4
No	78.6

Additional Locations

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	35.7
No	64.3

Tenure

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Lease	42.9
Own	53.6
No Response	3.6

Security

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	75.0
No	25.0

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Professional Service	14.3
Alarms	60.7
Fence	25.0
Dog	14.3
Other	7.1

Average Wage

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Below \$7.25/hour	0.0
\$7.25-9.00/hour	6.7
\$9.01-11.00/hour	20.0
\$11.01-13.00/hour	6.7
\$13.01-15.00/hour	3.3
\$15.00-18.00/hour	13.3
Over \$18.00/hour	6.7
Other	20.0
No Response	23.3

Benefits

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Health Insurance	23.3
Life Insurance	10.0
Dental	13.3
Vision	10.0
Other	10.0

Community Interaction

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	36.7
No	63.3

Business Association Memberships

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	20.0
No	76.7
No Response	3.3

Port of Wilmington

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	41.1
No	58.6

Incentives/Programs

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Christiana Gateway Tax Incentive Program	0.0
Real Property Tax Exemption Program	0.0
Head Tax	0.0
Enterprise Zone	0.0
Blue Collar Tax Program	0.0
Brownfields	3.4
Disadvantaged Business Enterprise	3.4
Federal Small Business Administration Programs	0.0
Other Programs/Incentives	3.4
City Commerce Department	3.4
Wilmington Economic Development Corporation	0.0

Small Business Development Corporation	3.4
Delaware Economic Development Office	3.4
Other Offices	6.9

Previous Knowledge

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	24.1
No	75.9

Expansion Plans

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	50.0
No	50.0

Southbridge Businesses Should Expand

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	30.0
No	53.3
No Response	16.7

Satisfied with Police and Fire Response

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	66.7
No	26.7
No Response	16.7

Satisfied with Worker Pool

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	85.7
No	14.3

Vo-Tech Training would be Beneficial

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	80.0
No	20.0

Would Use Southbridge Bank

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	80.0
No	20.0

Would Use Southbridge Catering

	<u>Overall (%)</u>
Yes	79.3
No	20.7